

**POUCH AND METHOD UTILIZING
POUCH FOR CLEANING GARMENTS**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The invention relates to a pouch and a method utilizing the pouch for cleaning soiled garments.

The Related Art

Damage, including entanglement, fraying and even tearing, can occur in the laundering process. Mechanical rotation inherent in washing machines and dry cleaning equipment is usually the immediate cause of the problem. Yet even hand laundering admits to some damage.

Delicate fabrics, weaves, and elongated textiles are particularly susceptible. Womens' hosiery has long suffered because of its delicate nature. Presently, there are available open-weave mesh hosiery bags into which nylon leggings and other delicate fabrics can be placed for protection in the laundering process. Hanes Corporation sells such a device in the form of a net-like bag with an opening controlled by a drawstring. The full particle is placed within the bag and the latter is placed within a washing machine.

Other related art includes U.S. Patent 4, 010,784 (Patik) disclosing a generally rectangular bag of mesh material. An extension flap is foldable over an opening at one end of the bag. Personal clothing is inserted within the bag, which is then vigorously agitated in a washing machine.

U.S. Patent 4,630,312 (Milstein) reports an improved laundry bag construction having a generally trapezoidal configuration. A flap utilizing a VELCRO closure device is employed to effect secure sealing of the bag.

All of the aforementioned protective bags operate by completely surrounding the garment. Yet some types of clothing articles with complex construction have only a portion of the construction requiring protective treatment. Placement of the full clothing article within confines of the bag would hinder the cleaning process. Contact with the wash media is inhibited by the bag as a barrier. Only delicate articles of clothing or portions of articles are best subjected to protective care in the wash process.

Religious garments known as tzitzis (alternatively referred to as arba kanfos) and as tallis are garments worn by Orthodox Jews. On each of the four corners of these garments, fringes consisting of eight strings are attachedly dangled. Agitation during the cleaning process causes individual strands of the fringes to become entangled with adjacent ones. Occasionally, the strands are even sheared-off when they inadvertently attach to a stationary object in the rotating environment.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a method for cleaning a soiled garment.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method for cleaning a soiled garment by protecting only the loose portions requiring delicate care.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a method for cleaning a soiled garment fitted with fringes, such as found in tzitzis or a tallis.

Still a further object of the present invention is to provide a pouch into which only the delicate portions of a soiled garment are placed for protective care during the cleaning process.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A method for cleaning a soiled garment is provided, the method including:

- (i) preparing the soiled garment for cleaning by inserting only a portion into a protective care pouch, the pouch formed of an open-mesh material of elongate structure with opposite first and second ends, the first end having an openable mouth and a fastening connector for releasably joining the pouch to the garment;
- (ii) attaching the pouch to the garment thereby forming a joined article either before or after step (i);
- (iii) immersing the joined article into a fluid media for removing soil from the garment;
- (iv) removing the joined article from the media; and
- (v) uncoupling the joined article to separate the pouch from the garment.

Additionally, there is provided a pouch for protective care of a soiled garment employed during a cleaning process, the pouch including an open mesh woven or non-woven fabric formed into an elongate structure with opposite first and second ends, the first end having an openable mouth circumscribed by a drawstring for restricting a diameter of the mouth and a slit at least partially traversing the pouch, orthogonally oriented to the open mouth, the slit having opposite ends being closeable by a zipper

framing the opposite edges.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Further features, advantages and objects of the present invention will become more readily apparent through consideration of the following drawing in which:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a soiled pair of tzitzis having fringes awaiting insertion into a protective care pouch;

Fig. 2 is a partial view of Fig. 1 showing capture of the fringes within the pouch, now zippered closed;

Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the pouch taken along lines 3-3 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a plan perspective view similar to that of Fig. 1 except illustrating two pouches, each providing protective care for two sets of fringes;

Fig. 5 is a view similar to that of Fig. 2 except illustrating a second embodiment wherein a side slit with zipper closure is absent; and

Fig. 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 6-6 of Fig. 5 further illustrating the second embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Now it has been found that delicate garments subject to tangling, particularly religious garments, such as tzitzis, can be protected from damage by pouches and systems according to the present invention. A key aspect is that only the vulnerable portions, the fringes along all four corners, are placed within a protective cage. Remaining portions of the garment are allowed to freely contact a washing media outside the confines of the pouch.

Fig. 1 illustrates a tzitzis 2 which includes a tunic 4 bounded by four corners 6 and a central neck opening 8. The tzitzis is worn as a poncho type of clothing with a person's head protruding through the neck opening and resting upon a wearer's shoulders.

An eyelet 10 is fashioned near each of the four corners. A set of four strings 12 collectively known as fringes 14 are threaded through the eyelet. Five knots 16 are tied spaced apart by windings 18 eventually leading to eight sections of string dangling at the end of the fringes.

A pouch 20 formed of a open weave mesh fabric is fashioned into an elongate structure. A first end 22 of the structure features an openable mouth 24 and on an opposite second end, the pouch is closed.

Along the openable mouth 24 is a guide passage 28. Drawstring 30 loops through the guide passage allowing leading and trailing sections 32, 34 to extend beyond either end of the guide passage.

Slit 36 traverses at least partially down the length of the pouch. Traversal may range from 10% to 100%, preferably from 25% to 75%, optimally about 50% down the length of the pouch. The slit is oriented orthogonal to open mouth 24. Closure of the slit is achieved through a zipper 38 moveable from first to second end of the pouch.

Pouches of the present invention may be formed from a variety of different materials. These may be natural or synthetic fabrics. Construction may be woven or non-woven. Among suitable fibers are synthetic ones including polyester, rayon, nylon, polyethylene, polypropylene, and combinations thereof. The most suitable natural fiber

is cotton. Combinations of natural and synthetics are also possible, including polyester/cotton varieties. The pouches of this invention will be of material with relatively open weave where the total aperture to total fiber surface area may range anywhere from about 1:1000 to 10:1, preferably from about 1:100 to about 3:1, optimally from about 1:2 to about 1:1 by area.

The method of cleaning the soiled garment according to the present invention may be practiced in the following manner. Pouch 20 is readied for use by moving the zipper 38 downward towards its starting position leaving slit 36 to its widest possible extension. Mouth 24 also is opened to its widest extension. As shown in Fig. 1, all four sets of fringes 14 are placed within cavity 40 of the pouch. An effort is made to stretch each of the strings 12 to lie untangled, extended within cavity 40. Insertion of the fringes is accompanied by moving the pouch upward towards the tunic 4. Movement is completed when mouth 24 encompasses at least a portion of knots 16, preferably encompassing all the knots. Either the leading or trailing sections 32, 34 of the drawstring 30 is threaded through eyelet 10. Attachment of the pouch to the tunic is completed by tying a bow 42 uniting leading and trailing sections. Drawstring 30 during the tying process concurrently forces the diameter of the mouth to constrict around the fringes. Figs. 2 and 3 illustrate completion of the process with the pouch snugly surrounding the fringes and tightly fastened to the tunic.

Fig. 4 illustrates an alternate embodiment of the pouch and method. In this embodiment, the zipper is removed. Control of the slit 36 is entirely remanded to the drawstring 30.

Instead of a single pouch, Fig. 4 illustrates the method using two separate pouches, each for protecting two sets of fringes. Figs. 5 and 6 illustrate completion of the method wherein the pouches each surround the fringes and are tied through the eyelets to the tunic.

Connectors other than drawstrings may be utilized for purposes of this invention. These connectors may be in the form of buttons, clips or VELCRO hook and thistle type mechanisms.

Soiled garments with their protective pouches attached can be cleaned in either a wet washing or dry cleaning process. Wet washing involves immersion of the joined article (garment with pouch) into an aqueous fluid containing water and a detergent. Surfactants and builders are normally found in the detergent as the cleaning agents. Washing may occur in a mechanical machine with a rotating drum or may be done by hand in a sink or basin.

Dry cleaning may involve immersion of the joined article into a non-aqueous solvent such as trichloroethylene, or in a more environmentally friendly system such as supercritical carbon dioxide.

Once immersion and agitation within the media has occurred over a sufficient time for cleaning, the joined article is removed from the media. Pouch and garment are then separated by untying the bow or other fastening device. By this method, the individual strings have been cleaned but also prevented from entanglement with one another, with other garments, or with machine parts utilized in the cleaning process.

Although the present invention has been described with particularity relative to the foregoing detailed description of the preferred embodiments, various modifications, changes, additions and applications other than those specifically mentioned herein will be readily apparent to those having normal skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of this invention.